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## SPANISH JOURNEY

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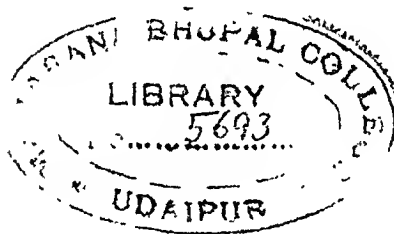
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# SPANISH JOURNEY

*Personal Experiences  
of the Civil War*

BY  
ELEONORA TENNANT



1936

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## PREFACE

THIS book is a record of what I saw and heard in Spain within the territories that have been recaptured by the Nationalist forces.

I went out to Spain prepared to form an impartial opinion as between the opposing factions. The majority of the newspaper accounts of the Civil War had led me to expect that both sides were equally ruthless and disorganised, and that whichever side might win in Spain would make little difference to the prospects of better times for the unfortunate populace. I have returned with two definite opinions. The first is that Communism will never bring either happiness or prosperity to the working classes. The second is that Spain, under General Franco's leadership, may, once again, become a great nation.

The principal towns I visited were Huelva, Seville, Talavera de la Reina, and Toledo, and the distance I covered in Spain was more than 1,500 miles. Contrary to what I had been led

## SPANISH JOURNEY

to expect, I found no difficulty in obtaining either military or civil passes to go wherever I wanted without any kind of restriction. I was free to move about alone, though sometimes I requested to be provided with an escort.

I left Spain on the 30th October, 1936. Therefore, everything in this book relates to events prior to this date.

It was only after I returned home that the idea occurred to me to write out my experiences in a form that might be published. It was my husband who persuaded me to do this. I wish to thank him for the help he has given me in getting my notes into book form.

In view of the variety of terms used for the different belligerents in the British Press, I wish to explain that throughout this book the term "Nationalist" refers to the side in the Civil War that is supporting General Franco, and which is referred to in the British Press under a variety of terms such as Rebels, Insurgents and Burgos Government. I have



## PREFACE

employed the terms "Red and/or Madrid Government" in reference to the supporters of the Popular Front Government which has Largo Caballero as Prime Minister and Señor Azaña as its President

ELEONORA TENNANT

*November 20th, 1936*

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## CHAPTER I

### FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF NATIONALIST SPAIN

ARRIVING at Villa Real de Santo Antonio on the Portuguese frontier without a Spanish visa, I was very relieved to find that two friends were there to meet me as arranged. Crossing the Guadiana River by ferry-boat we reached the Spanish frontier town of Ayamonte. A few explanations got me through into Spain. Everything was peaceful. Ayamonte was just a sleepy little town where everyone was going about his normal business. From here we motored over to Tharsis (Alosno).

A Spanish gentleman who came with me had been imprisoned by the Reds and considered himself extremely lucky still to be alive. He had been confined with other notables of his town for several days, never knowing when he would be taken out and shot. It was the unexpectedly rapid advance of the Nationalists that had saved them.

We passed through several villages. All was peaceful and therefore very different from

what I had expected. Everyone we passed on the road greeted us by raising the right arm with outstretched hand in the Nationalist salute. Before the advent of the Nationalists the usual greeting had been the Communist salute, the left fore-arm held up with clenched fist in menacing gesture.

In every village there were either Civic Guards or Civil Guards on duty. The Civic Guards, who have been enrolled by the Nationalists since the Civil War started, correspond to our special constables. Almost without exception every able-bodied man too old to fight has joined this voluntary corps. The Civil Guards are the regular police. This force has always carried arms and been responsible for the maintenance of law and order. While the sympathies of the Civil Guard are undoubtedly with General Franco, they have usually continued to carry out their duties without regard to which party happened to be ruling the territory at the time. Regular soldiers are seldom left to maintain order, as they are needed at the front. This task is left to Civil or Civic Guards or other voluntary forces.

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS

We passed through mile upon mile of pine forests, olive groves and orchards of fig trees. There were no barricades across the roads, and we were only once held up to show our passes. Motor-cars were gaily beflagged, and all, even lorries, bore a distinguishing mark. This was either the old yellow and red flag of Spain, now re-adopted by the Nationalists, or a white flag bearing wording such as "Long Live the Army", or "Long Live the Glorious Cadets of Toledo". Once, when our own flag blew away, my chauffeur got extremely worried as he thought we might appear to be unpatriotic.

After passing for three hours through undulating country rising at last into foothills, we arrived at Tharsis, where I called on the mine manager. It was interesting to hear this intelligent Scotsman tell of what had occurred in Tharsis on the outbreak of the Rebellion. These ancient mines, now under British management, have been worked at different periods since the days of the Phœnicians. They employ thousands of men. The moment it became known that General Franco had rebelled, the men downed tools and did not return to work for a

## SPANISH JOURNEY

fortnight, although they carried on the essential services. The province of Huelva boasted a Red Governor, therefore no one knew what was going to happen. The British women and children living at the mines were evacuated to a British destroyer lying in Huelva harbour. At 3 a.m. one morning the manager was awakened by violent knocking. On opening the door he was greeted by a party of Communists, all armed—an unpleasant situation to face in pyjamas. They ordered him to hand over all the dynamite on the company's premises. This he refused to do without an order from the Governor. The following day the men returned with the order duly signed by the Governor of Huelva and they took away a considerable quantity of dynamite.

Tharsis was one of the first places to be captured by the Nationalists, and fortunately the time factor spared this little bit of Spain from any major tragedies, although a certain amount of shooting was necessary before the Reds were dislodged. The Red leaders bolted into the hills as soon as they realised that the Nationalists were approaching.

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS

As conditions were so peaceful at Tharsis (the men are working better than they have done for years), I moved on to Huelva. Huelva, unlike what I saw later on, was again a surprise, and showed no signs of serious damage, except for the Church of Asunción, which was in ruins. The streets were crowded with people shopping and talking in groups. There was complete law and order. Shops were full of food and merchandise. The only sign of military activity was the fact that almost every man wore a uniform of some sort.

From Huelva I motored to Seville. Nearing Seville signs of war became more apparent. Many derelict cars burnt by the Reds were to be seen along the roadside. All the churches between Huelva and Seville had been set on fire and partially destroyed. The road was in good condition. We passed fields in which bulls for the bull-ring were pointed out to me.

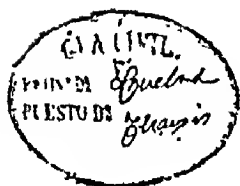
As we entered the city we passed several groups of fine houses that had been burned by the Reds. There were shell-holes in the wall of the Hotel Inglaterra, which is now being used as the headquarters of the Requeté (the



Por el presente se le concede autorizacion  
a la Señora Ferrnando para que pueda  
viajar a Huelva, y para que las autoridades  
no pongan impedimento alguno en su viaje

Huara 22 Octubre 1936

El Comandante del Puerto R.H.J.O.  
El Jefe del  
Benito Sanchez  
Matera

CIVIL PASS FROM THARSIS TO HUELVA

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Carlist volunteers). But the town as a whole was very little destroyed.

Seville was teeming with people; trams were running as usual, taxis were good and numerous, and there were many horse-drawn cabs. Perfect order was to be seen everywhere, and I was surprised to find Seville so full of life and bustle and the municipal services so efficient. "Business as usual" was the order of the day, except, I gather, that there was far more business than at any time since the fall of the Monarchy in 1931.

One of the sights in the main square was the constant arrival and departure of buses from country districts. They were always crammed with passengers, mostly peasants laden with produce. Apart from the local bus services, long-distance services, including a regular bus service to Portugal, were operating. Most of the trains in the Nationalist South were also running normally to pre-war schedule.

Seville market was overflowing, both with produce and people. It was difficult to circulate owing to the crowds. Bread and potatoes were cheaper than in London, costing

respectively 65 cents and 38 cents the kilo. Sugar cost 1.80 pesetas the kilo. The only commodity of which there was any scarcity was rice, because this normally comes from Valencia, which is still in the hands of the Reds. Nowhere in Nationalist Spain did I see the slightest sign of scarcity of food.

The service at the Hotel Madrid, where I stayed, was comparable to that in a first-class London hotel, but less expensive. The food was plentiful and good. I received telephone calls in my bedroom from as far away as Salamanca.

The fact that I had brought with me from London a large-scale map of Spain made me a number of friends. Such maps as there were had been bought up or commandeered by the Army. When it became known that I possessed a map, half the people in the hotel wanted to borrow it.

I soon learnt that to obtain a military permit to visit Toledo and other towns in the war zone it was necessary to call at the Palacio Yanduri, where the Nationalists have their Publicity and Refugee Offices, and their office

for dealing with foreigners. A large organisation is maintained for dealing with refugees from those parts of the neighbouring province of Málaga which are still in the hands of the Reds.

I was surprised at the readiness with which I was granted a military pass.

Although the officials at the Palacio Yanduri had in their turn to obtain my pass from the military headquarters of the Second Division, which was situated in another part of the town, I received the pass within a few hours of applying, and there was never any question of its being refused.

My chauffeur also quickly got his pass from the Falange, the organisation to which he belonged.

During my stay in Seville, I interviewed a large number of refugees from the Red territory, also residents of Seville, some of whose experiences are recounted in subsequent chapters.

I neither saw nor heard the slightest evidence to confirm the rumours published in some of the English papers that a large part of the



## SEGUNDA DIVISION

### Estado Mayor

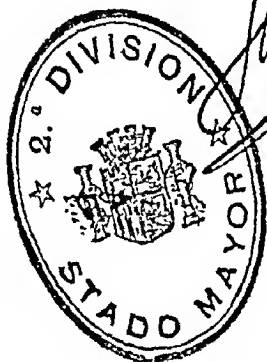


Sevilla 23 de octubre de 1936.

Queda autorizada por esta División de M<sup>re</sup> E.W; D. Fennant, para que pueda marchar a Toledo y regreso

De Orden de S.E.

El Tte. Coronel de E.M.



MILITARY PASS FROM THE HEAD-  
QUARTERS OF THE SECOND DIVISION

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS

poorer quarters of the town has been destroyed by the Nationalists. Except for the tragic refugees and the fact that almost the entire male population was in uniform and the squares full of men and boys drilling, it would have been impossible to imagine that conditions in Seville were not completely normal.

The large munition factory in Seville is now working for the Nationalists. Ample labour is available and many more men than are needed have applied for employment at these works.

A hairdresser I visited in Seville told me of the improved conditions under the Nationalists. He was a German who had lived in Spain for many years. Before the Rebellion he had been on the point of cutting his losses and returning to Germany. He said that his custom had almost vanished because no ladies ventured out of their houses for fear of being shot or worse. Now his trade was returning, as the ladies were having their hair attended to again and everyone could now venture out with complete safety.

After having been in Spain for several days, I had accumulated sufficient first-hand

## SPANISH JOURNEY

information to enable me to understand the main reasons for the outbreak of civil war.

The unsettled conditions in Spain which have culminated in the Civil War commenced in 1931. After the fall of the Monarchy, riots and strikes became customary methods of embarrassing successive governments.

The Popular Front Government, an amalgamation of Communists, Anarchists, Syndicalists, Socialists, and Left Wing Radicals, called by everybody in Nationalist Spain "Los Rojos" (the Reds), was returned to power by the elections held in February 1936. This was the signal for a general outbreak of lawlessness.

The workers, as the result of persistent Communist propaganda carried on over a period of years with financial assistance from Moscow, never doubted they could now behave as they liked. They believed that whatever acts they committed would not only have the approval but would have the support of the Red leaders they had placed in power, including permission to wreck their vengeance on all and sundry with no risk of punishment.

Immediately after the return of the Red

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Government, mine and factory work became completely disorganised. British managers of mines and factories all told the same story, viz., that from the moment the Red Government was returned, conditions rapidly went from bad to worse. The workers, run by Committees of Anarchists, Communists, or Syndicalists, put forward the most impossible demands which the owners nevertheless did their best to meet. Yet, as soon as one demand was settled, a more audacious one took its place. These demands were mainly put forward for the purpose of creating difficulties, and the last thing the Communists really desired was a settlement of any dispute. Stay-in strikes were accompanied by the shooting of individuals, and the Red Terror became gradually established.

It is admitted that the low level of agricultural wages in Spain might justifiably have been a cause of unrest, but not so industrial wages, which allowed a decent standard of living to be maintained. Yet, it was in industrial centres where Communism has flourished while the countryside remained generally immune to the poison.



## SPANISH JOURNEY

In every village and town throughout Spain the Reds prepared lists of those they proposed to shoot. The name of the British manager of a large cork company was on one of these lists for the sole reason that he had settled a strike. Few people outside of Spain can realise the extent to which shooting of individuals had already occurred after the return of the Popular Front Government and before the outbreak of civil war. The son of a former Mayor of Huelva told me the story of his friend, Manolo Jiraldez. Owing to the fact that this man's father, a port official in Huelva, had fled to Portugal, Manolo became a marked man. Manolo was then performing his military service in Seville. Going off duty late one night he sat down in a café in the centre of Seville where the Reds shot him in the back as he sat. He fell to the floor and was fired on again. He was then kicked in the face by the Reds while still alive and his head terribly mutilated. His murderers were never arrested because, under the Red Government, no court dared to convict a Red.

Take the following illustration—Eugenio

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Eizaquire—president of a court in Seville, convicted a Communist for murder, although he had been previously warned that he would be shot if the Red was found guilty. During the trial Eizaquire stated that if one man kills another that man deserves death. Within a few days Eizaquire was shot dead in the street.

By the spring of 1936 shooting of individuals under the Popular Front Government had become general throughout Spain. As a natural consequence reprisals were practised by the Right element because it is not easy to see one's friends and relatives murdered without taking the matter into one's own hands when it is known that no courts dare to convict.

When the Civil War broke out industry became, if possible, even more disorganised. Orders were broadcast from Madrid that employees had to be paid whether they worked or not.

The British manager of a large company near Barcelona, who has lived in Spain for twenty-five years, described the outbreak of the Civil War in his village. The Reds immediately erected barricades at either end of the main street, all roads leading out of the village were

blocked and no one was allowed to leave. All wireless sets and all arms and ammunition had to be handed over to the Reds on pain of death. All the factory hands downed tools and no work was done. There was no delivery of mail, telegrams or newspapers, and no private telephone service.

The British manager of a factory in Seville who had been away on holiday when the Civil War broke out said he could not believe, when he got back in August, that his employees were the same people. Workmen who previously used to scowl at him (as they now explain, for fear of being suspected of being lukewarm in their support of Communism), talked to him on the most friendly terms and told him they would do anything to avoid a return of the Communist regime. He said that a complete change had taken place in the relationship between masters and men. There is now a feeling of happiness and contentment amongst his workpeople that had not existed for many years.

Asked how the Nationalists had treated his workpeople and if many had been shot, he replied that he had only lost one of his

workmen—a notorious Communist shot by the Nationalists (for refusing to surrender arms after repeated warnings).

Persons of all classes agreed that things could not have gone on as they were—something had to happen. It is, therefore, not surprising that immediately General Franco made his *coup d'état* at Tetuan, millions of Spaniards hailed him as their potential deliverer from the Red Terror. The *coup d'état* at Tetuan was the spark that set Spain alight. General Queipo de Llano took Seville with a handful of less than 200 men. While the Reds were busy burning private houses in one end of Seville, General Queipo de Llano was calling for Nationalist volunteers in the Centre Square. The response of all classes was astounding. There were many remarkable incidents. For instance, two columns of Red volunteers were hurriedly formed to help in the defence of Seville—one came from the Rio Tinto mines and the other from Huelva. They marched on Seville. The Huelva column arrived first and immediately went over to General Llano. Whereupon the General about-turned the Huelva column and

## SPANISH JOURNEY

marched them out of the town to meet their comrades arriving from Rio Tinto. These latter were so surprised at the reception they got that they beat a rapid retreat. After three days Seville was entirely in the hands of the Nationalists.

Southern Spain had been regarded as a Socialist and Communist stronghold, and when Seville fell so easily to the Nationalists it was a sign that all classes had had their fill of Communism. Franco's rebellion was the signal for an intensification of the Red Terror in every part of Spain not occupied by the Nationalists. Promiscuous shooting of individuals gave way to mass murder.

The Nationalists only struck just in time as a Communist rising on a grand scale had been planned to take place a few days later. The complete plans for the Communist revolution which were prepared in May 1936, under the guidance of Ventura (a delegate of the Third International), have fallen into the hands of General Franco, so there is no secret about them. The meetings at which these plans were drawn up were attended, not only by

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS

representatives from the Revolutionary Committee of Spain, but also by delegates from the French Communist Party and from Russia. In the confusion that occurred the Communists took the turn of events as a signal for their own revolution. In Huelva, immediately it was known that Franco had risen, lorry-loads of armed Communists and Anarchists flocked the streets shouting "Viva la Revolución". They did not say "Down with the Franco Rebellion". They thought their own gong had sounded.

Communist technique was almost identical in every town and village. The plan carried out in the villages was usually as follows:

1. The churches were sacked and burnt.
2. Nuns and priests were tortured and murdered.
3. Private houses were sacked and burnt.
4. Individuals were robbed or murdered (or both), for the following reasons:
  - (a) because they belonged to the upper class.
  - (b) because they were church-goers.
  - (c) because they were anti-Communist or not sufficiently pro-Communist.

These appalling conditions continued everywhere until Franco's troops took the locality. The longer the town or village was under the Red Government the worse the Terror became.

## CHAPTER II

### THE JOURNEY INTO THE WAR ZONE

HAVING secured a military pass to enter the war zone, I decided to proceed to Toledo *via* Merida and Talavera de la Reina, a distance from Seville of 300 kilometres over two ranges of mountains. The manager of the Hotel Madrid helped me to hire a car and a chauffeur. I was somewhat disturbed to find, after we had started, and were well out of Seville, that José, the chauffeur, had never been to Toledo before, as I had been warned that if we made any mistake in the roads we might easily find ourselves in Red territory. Fortunately, José proved a treasure and thanks to my precious map we kept to the right road. He had, however, one alarming peculiarity, a passion for high speed. It was a matter of honour with him to accelerate when approaching a corner, and it made no difference whether this happened to be on a mountain pass or in a crowded village.

The appearance of the country was peaceful. The vintage was in full swing under the bluest

of skies, the harvest had been gathered, and the tilling of the land had not fallen behind. The road was excellent, well graded and well built, and, owing to the almost complete absence of traffic, we travelled fast. Except for many burnt cars and lorries by the roadside and an occasional aeroplane lying crashed in the fields, it was only in the towns and villages that there were signs of war. In most of these the churches had been destroyed and many houses were in ruins.

In a small village beyond the town of Merida, José halted the car so that I might examine a wall surrounding the village cemetery which had been used by Red firing-squads as a place of execution. This wall was about 7 feet high, and part of the wall, about 12 feet in length, was pitted with hundreds of bullet-holes. Only a space about a foot in width at the top and a foot wide at the bottom was free of bullet-marks.

Expecting that it might be difficult to obtain food *en route*, I had brought along a picnic lunch. This proved quite unnecessary as good cheap meals could be obtained in the taverns



## SPANISH JOURNEY

of all villages we passed through any time of the day and most of the night.

We had also brought some cans of petrol, but these were not needed as all the petrol stations along the route were functioning normally with ample supplies of oil and petrol. It was only in the actual war zone that permits to purchase petrol were necessary and these were easily obtained. Whenever we stopped for meals or petrol, José exhibited a remarkable talent for making deep friendships at record speed. Two minutes' animated conversation with a perfect stranger usually terminated in an exchange of resounding kisses on both cheeks accompanied by vigorous thumps in the middle of the back. It made no difference to José whether the person he was talking to was a soldier or a civilian, a Moor or a Spaniard.

On reaching Talavera we came into the war zone. There were hundreds of lorries, used for bringing up supplies, parked in rows outside the approaches to the town. As we arrived in the late afternoon, my first thought was for accommodation for the night. I tried several of the better-looking taverns, but no room was

to be had. At last, in a side street, I found an old house that let out rooms. The difficulty was to find a room to myself, as every room seemed to contain two beds. With the thousands of troops billeted in Talavera, I began to realise what an unreasonable request I was making. I had visions of passing the night in the car. However, mine host came to the rescue, and asked whether I would mind paying double for the room. As it only cost three pesetas (one shilling and fourpence) a bed, I quickly agreed. The room was rough, but there was water to wash with. The unchanged sheets did for everyone in turn. Sleeping in someone else's used sheets did not prevent me from sleeping well. I had brought "Flit" with me, and a plentiful spraying of the bed with this excellent chemical calmed my suspicions. The innkeeper and his daughters were kindness itself.

Having secured accommodation I set out to explore the town. The central square was crowded with troops, and in the centre a band was celebrating the news that Portugal had recognised General Franco's Burgos Government. I found a seat in a café filled with

Foreign Legionaries who, contrary to what I had expected, were all Spaniards. I got into conversation with some of the soldiers, and drinks were served all round. As these troops were resting they were in high spirits. But these Spanish Tommies never lost their dignity or consideration. The whole time I was in Talavera I never saw one single action that any Britisher could take exception to, although more than once I was about until past midnight.

The troops I saw were mostly regulars or Requeté and a small number of Falange. The Requeté, who were only formed after Franco's rebellion, and are now said to number 160,000, are an offshoot of the old Carlist Party. They have all volunteered for active service at the front, and they have a distinguishing uniform and wear a red beret. The Falange are members of the Spanish Fascist Party which has been in existence for some years, and who have now thrown in their lot with Franco. They wear a dark blue shirt and breeches. Very few Moorish troops were to be seen. The morale of the troops was excellent, and their calm determination was impressive.

## INTO THE WAR ZONE

During my stay in Talavera the town was bombed, but the populace showed no signs of panic. Food was abundant and good, four ample courses (such as beans, omelette, veal and potatoes, fruit and bread) were served at most hotels and cafés. The main difficulty was to find a seat, but patience was always rewarded, as meals were served far into the night.

At dinner one evening a flying officer sat at my table. He said that the Reds were employing several Douglas 'planes officered by British, and that French planes came over daily from French aerodromes, returning to France at night. He also told me that Franco had such a surplus of pilots that Nationalist flying officers complained that they had not enough to do. Several people I talked to in Talavera expressed surprise that I should have wished to study the situation in Nationalist territory. They had heard that the British who go out to study the Civil War confine their investigations to territory under the Madrid Red Government. It was more than once said to me, "You are the first English person we have seen this side, but we hear there are lots of English with the

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Reds." I myself only met one Englishman with the Nationalist forces near the Front. He was the *Daily Mail* correspondent. This may explain why this paper has been giving consistently accurate news.

Talavera had suffered the usual Red atrocities before the Nationalists arrived. More than 100 of the inhabitants were shot, including a number of priests and nuns. Many of these suffered appalling tortures. The prison conditions as recounted by a refined English woman (married to a Spaniard), who had been in Talavera under the Reds, are too horrible to record in detail. Suffice to say that over 50 men and women were imprisoned for many weeks in one small room and never allowed to leave it under any pretext. Hardly any furniture and no conveniences of any kind were supplied. The centre of the room had to be used as a public latrine. The atmosphere became so unbearable that some died and others continually lost consciousness. No one had any opportunity of changing clothing of any kind.

### CHAPTER III

## THE SIEGE OF THE ALCÁZAR

FROM Talavera I proceeded to Toledo, which town under normal conditions is only about an hour by car from Madrid.

Immediately after leaving Talavera, the signs of battle became more obvious. Shell-holes became more frequent, and the number of derelict cars increased; trenches and sandbag shelters, and mules and donkeys lying dead in the road, were constantly met with.

The village of Olalla, halfway to Toledo, was in ruins—hardly one house was undamaged. Some peasants, who were given a lift to Toledo, described the punishment meted out to the Communist women of the village by the Nationalists after its capture. They were compelled to shave their heads, leaving a tuft of hair in front as a distinguishing mark.

Toledo, standing as it does high above the surrounding country, is visible from afar and still dominating Toledo are the ruins of the Alcázar. At the foot of Toledo is the River

## SPANISH JOURNEY

Tagus. The centre arch of the ancient bridge that crosses the river had been blown up by the Reds, and the temporary wooden planks had to be negotiated with the utmost care. Once across the river the road winds slowly up to the centre square, situated close beneath the ruins of the Alcázar. These ruins had poured down like a vast avalanche over the surrounding houses. Destruction on such a grand scale has to be seen to be imagined.

In order to get into the Alcázar it was necessary to climb over vast rocks of masonry. The Red front line at the foot of the ruins was marked by thousands of empty cartridges and many empty shell-cases. Burnt motor-cars and lorries had been caught in the debris. When the first mine exploded one motor-car was blown a distance of a kilometre, smashing in the side of a house as it landed.

The Alcázar, one of the famous monuments of European history, has been destroyed.

The four famous towers have gone—the four outer walls have gone—only the four inner walls remain with shattered roof beams hanging from their edge. The flood of ruins

## SIEGE OF THE ALCÁZAR

has overflowed one end of the Central Square. But still undamaged is the bronze plaque on the south-west wall reading:

A los que mueren  
por su Patria los recoje  
la inmortalidad.<sup>1</sup>

A small part of one immensely thick outer wall remains and leaning against it I saw three ladders roped together and standing on top of an ancient Spanish chest. At the end of the siege this had become the principal look-out post.

I had the honour of being invited to the officers' table at the headquarters of the Requeté, among whom were two officers, Captain Mariano Miedes and Captain José Sanz Diego, who had both been through the siege.

I had a sensation of being in the presence of men of rare courage and endurance. They were good enough to agree to answer any questions and for two hours they recounted the epic of the siege.

To the first question, why it came about that

<sup>1</sup> "Immortality is assured to all those who die for their country."



## SPANISH JOURNEY

so many as 1,996 souls came to be in the Alcázar when the siege commenced, the reply was: Immediately General Franco's rebellion broke out, Colonel Moscardó, who was in command of the Alcázar, ordered the three companies of the Civil Guard who were stationed in the surrounding country to take up their quarters in the Alcázar, bringing their wives and families with them. The Colonel gave this order because he knew that he could count on the loyalty to the Nationalists of the Civil Guard at Toledo, and he knew that they would therefore prefer to die as Nationalists rather than to save their lives by supporting Communism. The summoning of the Civil Guard with their families accounts for the number of women and children, namely 795, out of a total of 1,996.

It was by no means easy for the three companies of the Civil Guard, who were spread over a wide area, to make the necessary dispositions to enable them to reach the Alcázar, with their wives and families, and one company under the command of Captain Ossorio had to bluff its way out of a Red hold-up by explaining

## SIEGE OF THE ALCÁZAR

that it was on its way to Toledo to help the Communists.

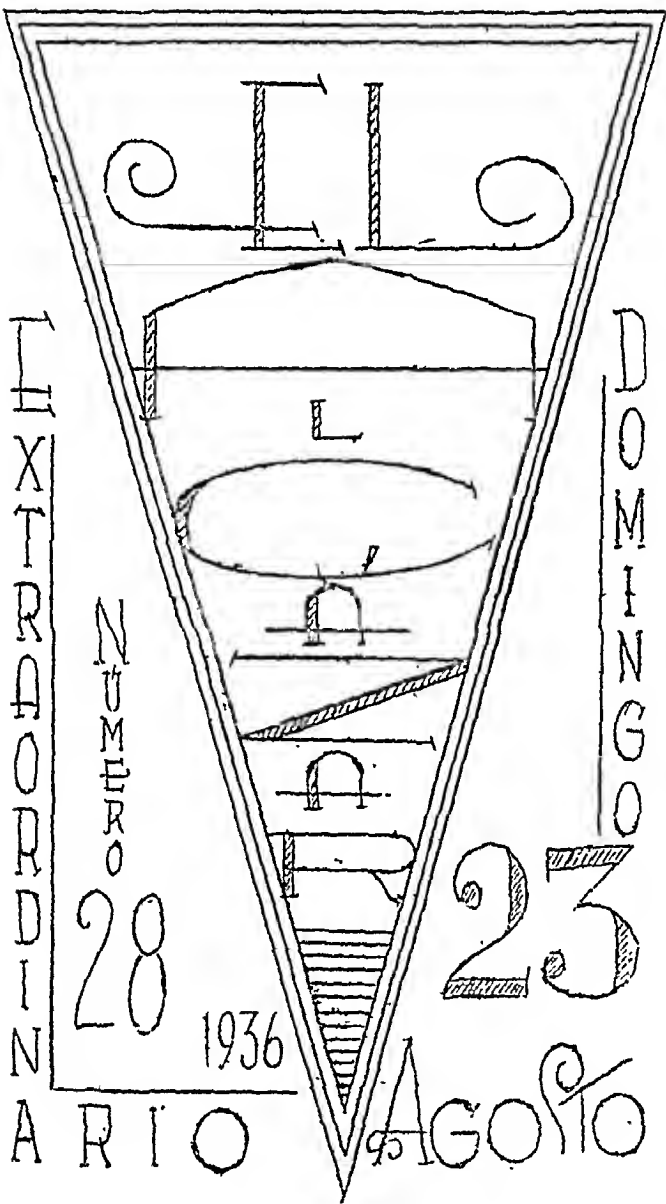
It was on July 24th, six days after General Franco had risen in Tetuan, that the troops in the Alcázar openly rebelled against the Madrid Government. When they elected to revolt against Madrid they never had the slightest hope or expectation of being relieved. The siege lasted for 67 days, and at the end of this chapter is a translation of the final summary of the siege as published in the typewritten broadsheet that was produced daily by the heroic garrison.

It was thought in Britain that the Alcázar, since it was the Spanish Sandhurst, was being defended mainly by young military cadets. This is not correct, as July is for them a holiday month. Only seven cadets took part in the siege. When the revolution broke out the cadets were not recalled, but seven of them decided on their own initiative to return immediately they heard of the Nationalist rising.

- Throughout most of the siege the beleaguered garrison was out of touch with any

## SPANISH JOURNEY

news except the daily broadcasts from Madrid. Since the Reds had cut off the electricity, the defenders of the Alcázar could not recharge their wireless accumulators. Consequently, they were unaware of how General Franco was faring. The only communications received by the garrison directly from General Franco were contained in two letters dropped by aeroplane on August 22nd. A facsimile of the three-page news-sheet containing these letters, as circulated to the garrison, is printed on the three following pages. A translation is given on p. 57. Some newspapers were also dropped on this occasion. Towards the end of the siege, thanks to an accumulator taken from a motor lorry, they were able occasionally to receive news from Italy and Portugal. As the Madrid broadcasts never mentioned a Franco victory the defenders of the Alcázar had no idea how the Nationalists were progressing, and it was with astonishment that they noticed during the last week of September a remarkable change of tone in the news from Madrid, and this gave them their first reason for hoping that relief might be on the way.



EXTRAORDINARIO

DOMINGO

NUMERO 28

1936

23

AGOSTO

# ORDEN DE LA COMANDANCIA MILITAR DEL DIA 22 DE AGOSTO DE 1936.

En el día de hoy hemos tenido la alegría de que en un avión de España haya venido en vuelo heroico y arriesgado a solidarizarse y reconocer nuestro esfuerzo por la santa causa de nuestra Patria esta alegría a la que han de sumarse otras más en días sucesivos, exige de nosotros el que contemplemos el porvenir con la seguridad del triunfo, pero este exige de nosotros el que sepamos que para el logro del mismo necesitamos nuevos y quizás más intensos esfuerzos y que debemos prepararnos para ellos con el mejor ánimo y el mayor espíritu de perseverancia, dispuestos ahora como siempre a los mayores sacrificios, incluso el de nuestras vidas, nunca mejor ofrecidas que al servicio de una futura España tan grande como es nuestro deseo

así lo esperamos todos vosotros quien tiene como el mayor honor de su vida el mandarnos en estas horas históricas

AL CORONEL COMANDANTE MILITAR,  
MOSCARDÓ.-Rubricado

Con posterioridad a esta orden hoy por la mañana el Comandante Villalba ha encontrado un mensaje letrado y honrado con los colores de la antigua bandera española en el que se contenían las dos cartas que insertamos a continuación que reproducimos en su forma y texto, ellas constituyen nuestra ejecución por el prestigio de quien las redacta

TEXTO DE LA FRONTERA: Hay un escudo de España con coronas mural y en nombre que dice: GENERAL JEFE DEL EJERCITO DE AFRICA Y SUR DE ESPAÑA. Sigue: "A los bravos defensores del Alcázar Toledano. Nos enteramos de vuestra heroica resistencia y os llevamos un adelanto del auxilio que os vamos a prestar. Pronto llegaremos a esa, mientras resistir a todo costa que os creemos llevando los pequeños ahorros que podemos. ¡Vive España! El General.-R.Frenco Besande.-Rubricado".



## SPANISH JOURNEY

In the early days of the siege the Reds cut off the water and light, but, fortunately, there were deep wells—sufficient, with strict rationing, to supply minimum requirements for drinking and cooking. Those who were not actually on duty lived in underground premises built by the Moors a thousand years ago. Being a garrison it was well stocked with supplies of food and ammunition. Nevertheless, the feeding of 2,000 people was a serious difficulty—there was sufficient horseflesh, but a lack of flour. Near the Alcázar there was a big granary, and by making constant sorties at night the defenders brought in altogether some 150 sacks of grain. Whenever a sortie was to be attempted by creeping out on the side of the Porto dos Cantos, a demonstration was made at the opposite end of the Alcázar to draw off the Reds. In the darkness and in a civil war, where all spoke the same language, it was not easy to distinguish friend from foe.

Another difficulty was to turn the wheat into flour. The wheat had to be ground by one small mill attached to the engine of a motor-bicycle. The lack of salt was more seriously

## SIEGE OF THE ALCÁZAR

felt than any other shortage. There was no fresh milk, but just enough tinned milk to keep the children and sick alive. For fuel for cooking, the garrison employed wood from ammunition boxes and timber as it fell from the roof and other parts of the building under shell-fire, and dried horse-droppings. For dealing with the sick and wounded there were three military doctors and a small quantity of surgical necessities. Operations, including amputations, were usually performed without any anaesthetic. What little chloroform there was, was reserved for exceptionally bad cases. After the anti-tetanic serum gave out there were two cases of death from tetanus. Two babies were born during the siege. The dead were buried in a latrine specially reserved as a cemetery. They were buried upright, packed in loose earth and debris taken from the ruins.

Of the 1,100 combatants, 59 per cent were killed, wounded, or buried in the debris. Thirty deserters are included in this figure.

An outstanding incident in the siege is the story of the death of Colonel Moscardó's son,



who was taken as a hostage by the Reds in Toledo. By means of the telephone which still connected the garrison with the town, the Reds proposed to Colonel Moscardó that if he would surrender the Alcázar, they would set his son at liberty, but if he continued to resist, his son would be shot. The son was compelled himself to telephone his father for the answer. Colonel Moscardó's answer was: "My son, die like a Christian." The son was shot. And the siege went on.

The story of the mining of the Alcázar will become famous in Spanish history. It was soon apparent to the garrison that the Reds were driving a mine-shaft beneath them. Thanks to the engineers among their forces they were able to follow the progress being made and kept in hourly touch with the situation. The garrison knew where the mine was to be exploded and calculated exactly the area that would be affected, which they kept as a danger zone marked out by means of chairs, planks, etc. Only those allotted to defend this area were allowed to enter it. What was not known was the time selected for the explosion.

## SIEGE OF THE ALCÁZAR

Therefore, men for duty in this danger zone were selected by ballot and their period of service was limited to two hours at a stretch. The garrison used a sewer running underneath the Alcázar as a contra-mine from which they carried out their observations and in which several men were always on duty. When the danger became acute, each party, as they went on duty, bade good-bye to their comrades as if for eternity. Thanks to precautions taken, when the mine exploded only five men were killed. They are buried in the ruins.

The Reds have admitted that they fully expected that this explosion of 7,000 kilos of dynamite would completely destroy the Alcázar and kill most of the garrison and leave the way open for an easy victory.

In preparation for the attack which they knew would follow the mine explosion, the garrison prepared hand-grenades made out of empty food tins filled with gunpowder, nails and cartridges. When the great mine blew up, 5,000 Red troops waited until the dust and debris had cleared away and then they charged. To their utter consternation, as they

## SPANISH JOURNEY

climbed over the ruins they were met with a hail of bullets and hand-grenades. Within a few minutes they were in full retreat, leaving 1,600 dead and wounded on the ruins. The vast number of dead, unable to be reached by either side, became a menace to the whole town.

Having failed to conquer by creating an earthquake, the Reds next attempted to set the Alcázar on fire. They squirted the walls with 20,000 litres of petrol, but the flames merely licked the stone walls and died out.

Military opinion in Nationalist Spain is unanimous in thinking that the Alcázar should have been captured, but while they compelled the inhabitants of Toledo to live on bread and lentils, the Red troops were leading a life of dissipation and enjoying the best of everything, and this may partly account for their lack of success.

Had it not been for the change of tone in the wireless from Madrid the half-starved garrison would never have imagined that the army they saw advancing from the south was coming to their rescue. They would have thought they

## SIEGE OF THE ALCÁZAR

were Communist reinforcements. When, as they looked down from the heights of the Alcázar, they suddenly realised that it was the Nationalist troops who were approaching, the reaction of finding themselves within sight of relief from certain death was almost too great for human endurance. History will surely rank the defence of the Alcázar among the great feats of heroism. The bravery and spirit of the gallant few who won such a victory for Christianity and decency must surely be a guarantee that the foul policy of Moscow shall never ultimately triumph.

As to the historic old town of Toledo, the centre arch of the bridge is destroyed. The unique and ancient stained glass windows of the cathedral have been shattered by the mine explosion. Most of the houses near the Alcázar have disappeared and considerable damage throughout the town has been done by shell-fire and aerial bombardment.

The principal café in the Square facing the ruined Alcázar has been partially destroyed. This has not lessened its popularity. Its trade was rapidly returning in spite of having to

## SPANISH JOURNEY

cope with a shortage of anything to drink out of, as most of the glasses had been broken by the mine explosion. I happened to be sitting in this café when a large consignment of glasses arrived. This caused great excitement among the clientèle, as in future they would not have to wait their turn to be served until an empty glass was available.

One of the main sports of the Reds had been to collect "suspect" inhabitants and make them run round an open space called El Transito and then shoot them as they ran. On one night alone seventy-two inhabitants of Toledo suffered death in this way, but what Toledo has lost through the Red Terror it has more than regained by the glory of the siege of the Alcázar.

Since returning home I have seen Press reports accusing the Nationalists when they entered Toledo of having committed serious atrocities, especially to the wounded in the hospital. This I can neither prove nor disprove. I can only say that I do not believe it as I never heard the subject mentioned. I inquired about atrocities committed by either side and only

## SIEGE OF THE ALCÁZAR

heard of one case at Toledo that might be termed a Nationalist atrocity. This was a case of a Communist who was being tried for murder. This man not only admitted to murder, but gloried in the number of women he had raped, the people he had killed and the atrocities he had committed. He was allowed to boast of his horrible triumphs, but when he had finished, instead of being shot, he was beaten to death.

On the journey back from Toledo, I again stayed at Talavera, where I found the same accommodation as before. I had one disturbed night, as the rest of the house was filled with troops, and I heard them being roused at 1 a.m. The next morning I was woken by bombs being dropped. As on the journey up, so on the journey back, there was rarely a spare seat in the car. All along the road there were frequent demands for lifts. At one period we looked like a Christmas tree with seven soldiers, complete with rifles and equipment, hanging on the outside of the car, while inside were two peasants buried under a pile of melons.

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Towards the end of the journey, the road ran through vineyards, and we passed many wagons laden with grapes, a beautiful sight. On stopping to buy some bunches from a passing wagon drawn by mules, the peasants almost filled the car with armfuls of bunches for which they refused to accept any payment. They were so smiling and jolly and seemed so pleased that we wanted their grapes. We reached Seville about 6 p.m.

## SIEGE OF THE ALCÁZAR

### TRANSLATIONS

#### ORDER

*from the Military Commander, dated the 22nd August, 1936*

It was with joy that we sighted, to-day, a Spanish aeroplane coming heroically, in spite of the danger involved, to bring us a message of solidarity and of recognition of our effort on behalf of the sacred cause of our Fatherland. This joy, to which must be added other causes of gratification which occurred during the following days, demands that we shall look forward to the future with the certainty of triumph. It also demands of us, however, that we should bear in mind that this triumph cannot be obtained without more, and perhaps even greater, efforts, made with the greatest willingness, and in the greatest spirit of perseverance, and that we remain, as ever, prepared to make every sacrifice, up to and including the sacrifice of our lives, which are, indeed, the best sacrifice we can make in the service of the Spain of the future, if this country of ours is to be as great as we want it to be.

That is what is expected of you all by the man who deems it the greatest honour of his life to be at your head in these historical days.

*Signed.*—MOSCARDÓ

*Colonel, Military Commander*

After the issue of this order this morning, Commandant Villalba found, weighted and ornamented with streamers of the colours of the old Spanish flag, a message containing two letters, the form and text of



## SPANISH JOURNEY

which are literally reproduced below, and which, owing to the prestige surrounding the name of the man who drew them up, bind us with the strength of a Law.

TEXT OF THE FIRST.—This letter bears a crest of Spain, with a walled crown and a heading worded: THE GENERAL IN COMMAND OF THE ARMY OF AFRICA AND OF SOUTHERN SPAIN, followed by the text: "To the valiant Defenders of the Alcázar of Toledo. We are placing your heroic resistance on record, and we are sending you this to remind you of the assistance which we shall give you. We shall soon get there, and meanwhile hold out at any cost, whilst we give you such small assistance as we can. Hail Spain! Signed.—R. Franco Baamonde, General."

TEXT OF THE SECOND.—This letter bears a crest of Spain, with a walled crown and a heading worded: THE GENERAL IN COMMAND OF THE ARMY OF AFRICA AND OF SOUTHERN SPAIN, followed by the text: "This Army embraces the valiant Defenders of the Alcázar. We are getting nearer to you. We shall come to your help, whilst you hold out and we give you some small assistance. Our columns, having overcome all difficulties, are going ahead, destroying every resistance. Hail Spain! Hail the brave Defenders of the Alcázar! Signed.—F. Franco, General. At the foot: 22nd August 1936."

WE ARE DEEPLY GRATEFUL FOR THESE LETTERS! WE SHALL NOT FAIL TO LIVE UP TO THESE MESSAGES THROUGH

OUR SUBSEQUENT CONDUCT!

HAIL SPAIN!

## SIEGE OF THE ALCÁZAR

### WIRELESS NEWS REVIEW

#### *General Information*

This is supplied to us by the Spanish newspapers sent us yesterday by the victorious General Franco. We are, however, unable even to summarise the headlines, which alone would occupy more space than is available in this periodical, and we presume that, by this time, these papers have been sufficiently perused by all, so that no one of those who are shut in this glorious Alcázar remains in ignorance of the progress towards a complete success of our sacred cause, which, by this time, exceeds every hope we had based on it. It is, however, quite impossible to give any idea of the outburst of patriotism and of joy which was brought about by the gallant action of that aeroplane of ours, and such a description would require far more than the clumsy pen which is responsible for the writing of this humble periodical, and which is far below the task of recording adequately the intensive and complicated psychological and emotional reactions which followed. The same remarks apply also to the general impression made by the finding of the message ballasted with the letters from General Franco.

# SPANISH JOURNEY

## TOLEDO ALCAZAR

### PARTICULARS FOR THE PRESS

Duration of the siege, from the 21st of July to the 28th of September—days .. ..	70
15.5 cm. guns at Pinedo.. ..	2
15.5 cm. guns at Alijares .. ..	7
7.5 cm. guns at Pinedo and Alijares .. ..	7
10.5 cm. guns at Pinedo.. ..	4
Number of 15.5 cm. rounds fired .. ..	3,200
Number of 10.5 cm. rounds fired .. ..	3,000
Number of 7.5 cm. rounds fired .. ..	3,500
Number of 50 mm. mortar rounds fired .. ..	2,000
Hand grenades .. ..	1,500
Bombs .. ..	2,500
Storming attempts .. ..	8
Aeroplane attacks .. ..	30
Aeroplane bombs .. ..	500
Cans of petrol from aeroplanes.. ..	35
Bottles of inflammable liquid .. ..	200
Fires caused by aeroplanes and by gunfire .. ..	10
Mines .. ..	2
Blasting charges .. ..	2
Total days of 15.5 cm. gunfire .. ..	472
Fighting strength.. ..	1,100
Dead .. ..	82
Wounded .. ..	430
Hurt .. ..	150
Missing .. ..	57
Deserters .. ..	30
Natural deaths of men .. ..	5

## CHAPTER IV

### THE RED TERROR

EVERY day and many times in every day while I was in Spain I met people whose lives have been blasted by the hurricane of disaster that has swept from Russia over Spain during the last few months. On getting back to Seville, I interviewed more of the refugees with which this city is crammed, and this chapter is based on notes I made of individual cases collected throughout my journey.

On August 19th, 1936, the instructions that Moscow broadcast daily to the Madrid Government included the command "kill all priests", a command that has since been extensively obeyed.

Would the England of fifty years ago have remained on friendly terms with Governments which obeyed or issued such orders? What has happened to England to-day? is what the British residents in Spain are asking. Britain has enjoyed so long a period of internal peace, free from invasion or civil war, that it is clearly impossible for the average man or woman even

## THE RED TERROR

faintly to picture the tragedy of Spain under the Reds. They cannot or will not imagine what might happen in Britain in the event of a Communist revolution directed from Moscow. In their ignorance they picture a constitutionally elected Spanish Government resisting a Fascist rebellion, and in consequence they sympathise with the Government. But if an Englishman saw his small child seized by the legs and its head then bashed against a wall until it was dead, what would he do? Hundreds of Spanish children have recently met this fate. If an Englishman saw his daughter of nine raped in the street, what would his reactions be? Would he, like thousands of Spanish fathers have done, join in a civil war to throw out a Government that allowed such horrors, or would he say, "This behaviour is approved of by the constitutionally elected Government of my country and therefore I must put up with what is happening?"

It will be said, "but the British would never ill-treat women and children". Probably not if left to themselves. But history has repeatedly shown that the wildest passions are always

## SPANISH JOURNEY

aroused in every country in civil war and in any civil war against Communism the Communist leaders in Britain, as in Spain to-day, would be acting on instructions received from Moscow. The introduction of the worst and most obscene kinds of atrocity would be part of the Communist policy. Based on the experience the Communists have had over the past eighteen years in Russia, Italy and Germany, their technique of directing terrorist activities has greatly improved, and in Spain it has reached a high standard of perfection.

British eyes are as yet tight shut to the result of Communist propaganda on the working and intellectual classes. British Communists openly boast—the writer has heard them—that when they come into power they will strap all members of the “boss” class to the cannon’s mouth and blow them to pieces. If British Communism does nothing worse than this then we can be thankful for the moderation inherent in our people.

The persons interviewed were men and women from different classes and from different parts of Spain. The following, all of which

## THE RED TERROR

can be verified, have been selected as typical examples of the prevailing conditions.

### I

#### *The Case of Rafael Pabon*

The Pabons were a large family living at the village of Almárgen, in the province of Málaga. Owing to constant intermarriage the Pabon clan made up some 5 per cent of the 3,000 inhabitants. The whole province has been the scene of unbelievable horrors. When the revolution began it was entirely controlled by the Reds. The major part of it has since been captured by the Nationalists, but the capital city of Málaga and a semicircle of hinterland are still in the hands of the Communists.

When I interviewed Pabon he was about to leave for the front. Though full of quiet, determined courage he looked as though he had plumbed the depths of human misery. He told the following tale:

For two months after the outbreak of the Civil War, life in Almárgen remained normal, but on September 23rd a column of fifty Reds, led by women, suddenly appeared and began

## SPANISH JOURNEY

to loot the village. They then imprisoned the priests. Among the priests was Pabon's brother Andres, and a young cousin who was studying for the priesthood.

These two were taken to the town of Ronda, placed against the cemetery wall and shot. Eyewitnesses reported that the marksmanship was so bad that it required eleven shots to kill Andres, who died crying out: "Long Live Christ the King."

The next day another brother and two of Pabon's uncles were seized and imprisoned.

The head of the Popular Tribunal at Málaga was a woman, a notorious courtesan. The Pabon family knew her lover Boquino. They persuaded Boquino to get his mistress to accept a bribe of 10,000 pesetas wherewith to buy the freedom of the brother and two uncles, who were allowed to escape.

On 26th September, the Reds, hearing that the Nationalists were approaching from Seville, imprisoned 77 of the male inhabitants of Al-márgen suspected of being disloyal to the Government (of whom 50 were members of the Pabon family). These prisoners were



## THE RED TERROR

confined in one small room in the quarters of the Civil Guard. Once imprisoned by the Reds there is no leaving the room for any reason whatever. The results can be imagined. At midnight, a favourite hour, the Reds ordered the prisoners to come out as they were to be taken to Málaga. The prisoners suspected that they were to be shot and refused to come out.

The Reds then shot at them through the window. Eighteen men were hit, among them Pabon's father, Francesco Pabon, as well as other relatives. The people of Almárgen bear witness to the fact that of the eighteen casualties, those still alive were clubbed on the head with rifle butts. Their bodies were then burnt, although no steps were taken to make sure that they were dead.

The survivors then capitulated and were taken in lorries to Campillos, a nearby village, where 8 more were shot. The remaining 51 were taken on to another village, Pena Rubia, where they were then all shot dead.

Rafael Pabon had a delicate mother. When, shortly after her husband had been dragged

## SPANISH JOURNEY

from home, she heard shooting, she was overcome with grief and died about 4 hours later. She was left alone to die as the Reds forbade anyone to succour her.

At about this same date 3 more male cousins who had been imprisoned in another part of the village were promised their freedom, but as each stepped out of prison he was shot dead by Communist women. The Red fury was especially violent against the Pabons, because of the fact that there were some priests in the family.

As soon as the men of the village of Almárgen had been dealt with the Reds began arresting the womenfolk from the same unfortunate families whose men had been killed. Of the women taken prisoner 27 were relatives of Pabon. They were taken to a nearby empty factory, where the Reds put petrol-cans against the entrance and said they would burn them alive if the Nationalists approached. Two of Pabon's cousins escaped by jumping out of a window and reached Pruna, a village in the hands of the Nationalists. The Nationalists, on hearing of what was happening in Almárgen,

## THE RED TERROR

immediately went to the rescue and by making a wide detour they captured the village by surprise. Thanks to the bravery of these two women the Nationalists arrived in time to save the lives of those imprisoned in the factory.

To sum up:

Of the Pabon relatives in Almárgen, 55 men were killed within the space of a few days. Of these 1 was Rafael Pabon's father, 4 were his brothers, 18 were his uncles or first cousins, and he also lost his mother, who died from shock.

The Pabon family was by no means wealthy. Except for Rafael Pabon and the 2 men who were priests, or preparing for the priesthood, the rest were manual workers. The 10,000 peseta bribe given to the courtesan was collected from many friends and relatives. Rafael Pabon escaped through not being at Almárgen at the time, as he was studying for law in Huelva.

The population of Almárgen had been 3,000 at the beginning of September. By the end of the month it had been reduced to 700 souls, 100 men and 600 women and children.

## SPANISH JOURNEY

### II

The Hotel Madrid, in Seville, was full of refugees from various parts of Málaga Province. My attention was drawn to a particularly tragic couple—an old man with his grandson, a lovely boy of about 16 months. Their names cannot be mentioned, but the grandfather was head of a wealthy Málaga family.

The various members of this family had planned to escape by sea on a ship about to sail from Málaga to Gibraltar. For safety's sake the family separated, everyone was to make their way independently on board and the grandfather took charge of the baby. The grandfather and child were the only two to reach the ship. No sooner on board than the Red Guards arrived and demanded the child. Fortunately, he had been well hidden and was not found. The grandfather knows nothing of what has happened to the rest of his family. He now sits all day in Seville hardly taking his eyes off the baby. There are hundreds of similar cases.

## THE RED TERROR

### III

#### *The Story of Carmen Lopez*

This story was told me by a woman friend of Señora Lopez. Carmen Lopez was well born, with a big house in Málaga and a country house at La Vizcania—during the summer months she lived at her country house which she used as a holiday home for poor girls from Málaga. She took 20 girls at a time, and they were given every luxury.

On the 20th July, two days after the Civil War broke out, she was taken prisoner by the Reds and a month later she was shot without trial.

Carmen Lopez was quite unconnected with politics. Her only crime was that of trying to help others.

This case aroused great feeling as Señora Lopez was universally beloved and respected and noted for her unfailing kindness to the poor.

### IV

A member of the upper class (her name is suppressed because she is still alive) explained

## SPANISH JOURNEY

the reason for the burning of some of the houses in Málaga.

She was on her balcony when she saw a friend's house being fired on by the Reds. She turned to her maid and said, "What a pity to burn that beautiful house." The maid replied: "But the lady (who owned the house), belonged to the Conferenzia." The Conferenzia was an association of Málaga ladies who had combined to help the sick and needy. Evidently this was regarded as a crime by the Reds.

### V

#### *The Case of Conte I's Family*

In Seville I met Señorita I, daughter of Conte I, a few days after she had escaped from the city of Málaga. It appeared as though very little would over-balance the delicate equilibrium of her brain. She was pale and drawn-looking although a young woman of about 25 years. Her eyes had the deep and dilated look that comes with suffering and suppressed fear. Her courage was admirable. She told me her story;

## THE RED TERROR

After the Civil War broke out nothing happened for a while. Her house was on the sea-shore, surrounded by a garden, as were other houses in this locality. Then the Reds came and ransacked many houses nearby. They dressed themselves up in women's dresses stolen from the houses, stacked the furniture in the gardens and then set the furniture and houses on fire. The inmates took refuge on the sea-shore. The blazing furniture and houses with the Reds dressed as women dancing and yelling madly around made a terrible spectacle. The Communists behaved as fiends from Hell. The refugees on the shore finally obtained permission to go to Conte I's house, as it had not been burnt. About 30 people plus a few faithful retainers took refuge in Conte I's house where they were left in peace for a few days, the servants going out to buy food. Then the Communists returned, making the excuse that they were searching for some young Fascists. The Reds were told that the Fascists were not there. They went away, but they caught one of the servants who had been out shopping and beat her up. As

## SPANISH JOURNEY

Señorita I said, "she split." The Communists immediately returned to the house and demanded the young men. The old Conte, aged 74 years, refused to give up anyone who was under his protection. He said, "I am the head of the house. If you must take some one, take me." His two sons who were with him asked that the father be left and that they should be taken. Thereupon the Reds took all three of them. They were taken to a field called the field of the martyrs. A crowd followed because the Conte was well known and respected. The old man was ordered to run as they wished to shoot him running. This he refused to do, saying, "I stand here", and folded his arms across his breast. He was found dead with his hands still crossed and his body riddled with bullets. The two brothers were next shot, one was killed immediately, the other was shot below the stomach. He feigned death and was left by the Reds. He crawled to a hospital nearby, but was refused aid as he was not a Communist. He died in agony in the street a few hours later.

None of these men, who were all of them



## THE RED TERROR

civilians, received any sort of trial. Señorita I lost a third brother in the navy, shot by the Reds. She told me her story, without a tear, in the most ordinary voice. Only her expression showed the acute suffering she had gone through.

## VI

In Toledo Colonel Dusmet gave a short account of his experiences under the Reds in Madrid. He went to Madrid because, as a Reservist, he had been called up by the Government at the outbreak of the Revolution. On arrival he was arrested, and after some time in prison he was given a mock trial. He was asked why he was in uniform. He replied that being a Reservist he had received orders to report at Madrid and naturally he was in uniform. He was then asked why his eldest daughter was in Austria. He explained that she had lived there for the past three years as her husband had business there. For the criminal offences of having arrived in Madrid wearing a uniform and of having a daughter

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living in Austria, Colonel Dusmet was condemned to death. He was taken back to prison, but by the assistance of friends and helped by the muddle and confusion existing in Madrid he got away under a false name and with a foreign passport. Having escaped, his one idea was to join up with General Franco. After a complicated journey *via* Italy, Gibraltar and Huelva, he got back to Nationalist Spain. When the writer saw him he was the Colonel commanding the Requeté (Carlist volunteers), in Toledo. His son, aged seventeen years, was also in Requeté uniform, and he too had a tale to tell.

The son had been in Madrid at the time of his father's arrest. When he learned of his father's escape he pretended to be an ardent Communist, and was sent with a company of Reds to Barcelona. One day he saw a German ship lying in Barcelona harbour. Being a strong swimmer, he plunged into the sea and swam to the ship. He found some of the Germans from the ship playing water-polo and this helped his escape as he climbed up their ladder with them when the game was over.

## THE RED TERROR

Once on board, the Captain allowed him to remain. Like his father he managed to work his way back to Nationalist Spain to serve under Franco.

All those who have escaped from the Reds seem determined to join the Nationalists.

### VII

Señor La M. described to me the fate of one of his friends, a famous Málaga eye specialist. The Reds disapproved of the great reputation this man bore among the poor for kindness and service in the public hospital. As a warning to others, the Reds seized him one morning and gouged his eyes out. He was left in agony all that day and finally shot dead the same evening.

### VIII

Mr. B, an attaché at a Foreign Embassy, had just arrived *via* France from Madrid, where he has lived for several years. He was able to tell me about events that had occurred in the

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capital as recently as the beginning of October. In Mr. B.'s opinion the most tragic sight in Madrid is the hordes of homeless and parentless children. The parents have either been murdered or taken by the Reds to fight, and the women to dig trenches, and the children have no one to look after them. The Madrid Government takes great credit for the provision it has made to deal with these children at the Hotel Ritz and elsewhere. But the number of these wild children is so great that the Government has only touched the fringe of the problem. Many are said already to have developed venereal disease.

Mr. B. recounted the strange experiences he had had in connection with the efforts made by his Embassy to evacuate the widow of his country's late Consul in Valencia. The Consul, a Spanish millionaire, had been shot dead on August 20th, while trying to board a German ship. Mr. B's government (it is neither that of Italy nor of Germany) demanded an indemnity from the Madrid Government for this unnecessary crime. The indemnity they demanded was a free pass out of Spain for their

## THE RED TERROR

late Consul's wife and family. Largo Caballero said he would grant this pass, but the widow and family would have to come and get it in Madrid. Mr. B. was therefore sent to Valencia by his Embassy to fetch the widow and her children.

On reaching the Consulate he found that the family were imprisoned in their house, which was surrounded by Red Guards. Mr. B. presented his credentials and the free pass to the Syndicalists, who were then in command at Valencia. They refused to recognise the instructions of their own Prime Minister, Largo Caballero. Mr. B. spent from 11 a.m. until 4 p.m. arguing with them. Then he telephoned to Madrid. Caballero gave fresh orders over the telephone—this had no effect. The Commissar of the Syndicalists demanded several hundred thousand pesetas as his price for granting the release. The sum demanded was gradually reduced to 20,000 pesetas. Mr. B. insisted that there could be no question of money since the free pass out of Spain for the widow and family was the indemnity required by his Government for

## SPANISH JOURNEY

the shooting of their Consul. This argument eventually impressed the Commissar, who finally agreed to Mr. B.'s demands. Unfortunately, this did not end the matter as the Commissar had no control over his subordinates and they had been expecting their share of the dividend. The Commissar was not permitted by his own men to call off the guards from the Consulate. This attitude apparently made the Commissar more ready to help Mr. B. The Commissar agreed to supply Mr. B. with a car and an armed escort if he (Mr. B.) could make his own arrangements to get the family away.

Mr. B. carefully laid his plans. He now had two cars, his own and one supplied by the Commissar. He then approached the Red Guards surrounding the Consulate, and invited them to join him at a café for a drink. They readily accepted and left their posts. While the guards were still drinking Mr. B. excused himself, made a dash for the cars which were by now waiting ready, and so they got away, eventually reaching Madrid. From Madrid he went with the party to Toulouse,

## THE RED TERROR

which they reached by air, accompanied by a man from Caballero's entourage. At Toulouse aerodrome they were received by a crowd of French Communists who threatened to give up the widow to the local authorities unless she paid them a large sum of money. As these local French authorities were mostly Communists the position might have been serious for the poor widow had Mr. B. not been there to protect her against this attempted blackmail.

## IX

When I was at Huelva an English resident said that he could vouch for the following story, which occurred in the early days of the Revolution while Huelva was still in the hands of the Reds.

A Señor Tercero was lying in Huelva Hospital, having been wounded by the Communists. Some Reds drove up to the hospital in a car in which were the dead bodies of Tercero's son and son-in-law. They demanded that Señor Tercero should be brought

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out to them and put in the car with the bodies, as they wanted to bury them all together. The doctor protested that the man was still alive and could not be buried like that. The Reds replied that as they had no intention of being put to the trouble of digging a separate grave for Tercero, he must be buried at once. After a heated argument the doctor said: "Either you shoot him dead or you leave him." In the end the doctor persuaded them to go away without Señor Tercero, and as the Nationalists took Huelva almost immediately afterwards, Tercero has now recovered.

. . . . .

The above are but a small selection of the unhappy stories that I noted and which can easily be verified.

In a different category, because I do not claim to be in a position to verify them, are the current rumours of what is going on behind the Red lines. Three of these will be given; the fact that refugees calmly describe such happenings as most ordinary events is an indication of the existing terror and horror.



## THE RED TERROR

1. It is stated that at the Port of Málaga Red sailors seized several hundred young girls between fourteen and twenty-four years of age and carried them out to the battleships lying in the harbour. Many of these girls are stated to have jumped overboard in an effort to escape. The few that are said to have returned to their homes are all reported to be diseased.

2. Refugees from Madrid tell a tale of the compulsory marriage of a priest to a nun. The unfortunate bride and bridegroom are then said to have been stripped naked and compelled to consummate the marriage in the street, surrounded by a group of Reds. The couple were then killed.

3. It is stated that women are frequently seized by the Reds, and if they will not instantly submit to every wish, they are forced to undress by having petrol thrown over their clothes. They are then threatened with being set on fire. Many of these women victims of Red lust have had the initials of various Red parties, such

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as F.A.I. (Anarchist), C.N.T. (Syndicalist) burnt on their bodies with lighted cigarette ends. Unfortunately these tales could be multiplied a hundred times.

## THE WAR AGAINST RELIGION

ORDERS from Moscow to "destroy the past" have been most faithfully carried out in regard to the churches, and thousands of churches have been reduced to ruins. In Huelva the beautiful church of Asunción, which used to have forty altars, presented a spectacle of utter desolation. It had been burnt, sacked and pick-axed. Only the outer walls remained. The roof had gone and the bell-tower was in ruins. The inside was a mass of rubble. Even the beautiful Moorish tiles had been picked off the walls. The vestments had been burnt and pictures slashed. Nearly all other churches the writer saw along more than a thousand miles of road had met with a similar fate.

A small church I visited at Tharsis told the same story. The bell-tower was smashed, the altar burnt, and the church records were blowing about the surrounding country. The destruction of many thousands of parish records is another tragedy connected with the burning and sacking of churches.

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After the Nationalists had taken over Tharsis, the manager of the famous British-controlled Sulphur and Copper Mine asked some of those responsible for the sacking of the church why they had done it. They replied, "It was being done everywhere else and we had to do it too." The burning and sacking of churches has been going on ever since the return of the Republic in 1931, but the orgy of burning and sacking developed on a grander scale after the return of the Popular Front Government, and became almost universal immediately the Civil War broke out. Anyone known to be a regular churchgoer became suspect and liable to be shot. The torture and murder of priests, the torture, raping, and murder of nuns have been looked on by the Reds as deserving of praise. It was evidence of devotion to the Communist cause. To stand well with the Reds a Communist must be able to claim that he has put at least one priest or nun in his game-bag.

In Nationalist Spain the reaction to the persecution of religion has been that the remaining churches cannot hold the people who wish to attend divine service. A service I

attended at Talavera de la Reina was overflowing with soldiers and townsfolk. Hundreds were standing right down the aisles. An inspiring sermon was preached by one of the few surviving priests of this town, which had lost nine priests and nuns murdered.

Whatever mistakes the Church of Rome may have made in Spain, it surely never deserved such treatment even at the hands of anti-Christ.

REPRODUCTION OF PORTION OF  
TORN AND SCATTERED PARISH  
RECORDS

## CHAPTER VI

### THE OPINION OF BRITISH RESIDENTS IN SPAIN

BRITISH interests in Spain are wide and deep-rooted, and large sums of British capital are at stake in iron mines, copper mines, railways, and various industries, such as the wine industry and the cork industry. There are hundreds of Britishers resident in Spain looking after these interests, and almost without exception they are astounded and indignant at the opposition they feel is coming from Britain to the Nationalists and at the moral support that seems to be given to the Madrid Government.

Just because I was known to have recently come from London, I was bitterly attacked by British residents who stopped me in the street or in my hotel. To give one typical conversation.

A Scotsman, long resident in Spain, called at my hotel in Seville and addressed me as follows: "I hear you are out here looking for information—well, I have come round to

tell you what I feel about our people. I want to know why *The Times* and the B.B.C. are supporting the Reds. What is making the people in England so Madrid-minded when there is so much British capital in Spain? Don't they realise that if the Reds won this, capital would be confiscated?" He then went on heatedly to refer to the B.B.C. and the damage they were doing by their inaccurate broadcasts based on news received from Madrid. He pointed out that the false reports broadcast from London of towns being bombed has been causing unnecessary distress and alarm to relatives in England and elsewhere. He said that inaccurate reports about coastal bombing and movements of troops had caused loss of money to our shipping and had interfered with trade, because on several occasions captains of ships had avoided putting into ports which the B.B.C. had falsely described as being bombed.

Another Britisher who had lived in Huelva for some eighteen years was vociferous about the B.B.C. He told me that on about August 15th the B.B.C. announced that



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Huelva had been retaken by the Madrid Government.

This news, in an area where so many people speak English, spread like wildfire. Besides causing astonishment to the people of Huelva, who were living peacefully under the Nationalists, it caused 600 Rio Tinto miners to march on Huelva in the hope of taking part in the sacking of the town.

Near Huelva they met the Nationalist outposts, who opened fire, and about eighty of the miners were killed. The rest fled into the hills. My informant considers that this inaccurate broadcast was responsible for the death of these eighty men, as false information is as cruel as poison-gas.

I can testify from personal observation to one B.B.C. inaccuracy. On Wednesday, October 28th, they broadcast that on October 27th Talavera had been bombed, great havoc caused, and nineteen insurgent planes shot down.

I was in Talavera during this attack. About three Red planes came over and dropped a few bombs, which all fell just outside the

## OPINION OF BRITISH RESIDENTS

town. No damage was done, and no planes of either side were shot down.

The inaccurate broadcasts from England were a source of general comment among British residents in Seville, and I quote extracts from a letter I was handed from a prominent Scotsman which deals with the subject :

“Regarding our telephone conversation of to-day, the following is what actually happened.

“August 1st, midday, I heard the B.B.C. broadcast that Seville had been bombed (‘heavily bombed,’ I think) the previous night. As my wife was then in England and families of other British and foreign residents were also in England, I sent off the following cable—say, about 3 p.m.:

BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION  
LONDON

MIDDAY BROADCAST STATING AERIAL BOMBARDMENT LAST NIGHT COMPLETELY FALSE  
PLEASE GIVE PUBLICITY BEHALF FAMILY IN

## SPANISH JOURNEY

ENGLAND WILLIAM MUNDY BRITISH RESIDENT SEVILLE

“At 8 p.m. that evening the B.B.C. referred to the matter and said that since their midday broadcast they had received a cable from a British resident in Seville saying that Seville had not been bombed the previous night. The next day I sent the following cable, about midday, but did not listen in to the evening broadcast, and cannot say whether or not the B.B.C. mentioned same:

BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION  
LONDON

THANKS PUBLICITY PLEASE CONTINUE BEHALF FAMILIES ENGLAND SEVILLE RESIDENTS SEVILLE CONTINUES NORMAL SINCE TWENTY-SEVENTH FACTORIES DOCKS TRAMS WORKING GRANADA CORDOBA HUELVA CADIZ ALGECIRAS HANDS MILITARY MUNDY

“A few days later I followed up with a letter and drew their attention to the

inaccuracy of their news of Seville and district, which to my personal knowledge was inaccurate, and I suggested that they did not lean too much on Madrid news. I offered to send them a short cable twice a week or weekly, covering *Seville and district*.

"I enclosed the two cable receipts, valued about Ptas. 40, and suggested that they remit to me in view of the fact that the inaccuracy of their broadcast had entailed the expense. They replied, declining to remit, because they had not asked me to cable them, and therefore could not pay me, and also that they could not accept any offer of mine to find news, as they already had channels established for same. (Something in that strain.)

"I considered the matter closed, and did not reply. Since then I have destroyed their letter.

"Some days after the 4th, A., McWilliam and I composed a further cable (have no copy), in which we mentioned various names of British residents in Seville, and suggested that if the B.B.C. agreed, either A., McW.

## SPANISH JOURNEY

or myself would periodically find them local news or, at least, they should ask us to verify news like bombings of Seville before they broadcast same.

"Herewith copy of the cable sent on August 3rd, 1936, to B.B.C., London:

PASSENGER TELEGRAPH AND MAIL COMMUNICATIONS WITH SOUTH WIDE OPEN VIA GIBRALTAR STOP BENEFITTING FAMILIES BRITISH SUBJECTS GRAND, EDWARDS, PARKER, O'SHEE, ADAM, LUCAS, BALLERAS REQUEST VERIFY WILD STATEMENTS ABOUT THIS AREA EMANATING FROM OTHER SOURCES BEFORE BROADCASTING STOP IF NO RELIABLE CORRESPONDENT AVAILABLE UNDERSIGNED WILLING ANSWER ENQUIRIES ADDRESS ED HEINZ SEVILLE PERSONAL REFERENCES HEINZ LONDON."

Britons in southern Spain feel that there is no excuse for this continual dissemination of false information, because the Nationalist General, Queipo de Llano, broadcasts nearly

every night from Seville, giving accurate information as to the daily events. It is felt that, even if the B.B.C. prefers to rely on news from Madrid, the Nationalist version should also be given. "Do not the British public realise," I was often asked, "that if the Reds had won there would have been no security of life or property for anyone, foreigners as well as Spaniards? We have to thank God that Franco has managed to protect so many British lives and so much British property."

On returning home I have been re-reading *The Times* for August and September, in order to see what the British residents have to complain about. I took the siege of the Alcázar as a test case because I could judge it from personal experience. The following result seems to justify the complaints.

In *The Times* of August 31st their special correspondent on the Franco-Spanish front reports as follows (and here it might be mentioned that the regular use of the term "Franco-Spanish frontier" by the pro-Madrid *Times*

## SPANISH JOURNEY

correspondent was much criticised—it was thought to be deliberately misleading):

“One of the main objectives [of the insurgents] is [the relief of] Toledo, where 400 Army Cadets are still besieged in the Alcázar. The Government forces prefer to starve out the garrison rather than rush their positions because an unknown number of hostages are held by them. The cadets were believed to be on the point of surrender some days ago—but insurgent aeroplanes have succeeded in dropping medical supplies and food for them by parachute.”

This information was false from beginning to end. There were only seven cadets in the fortress. No hostages were ever held in the Alcázar, and throughout the siege no supplies of any kind were dropped by parachute—only on one occasion was anything dropped by air, and then only letters and newspapers.

The same correspondent reports in *The Times* of September 7th:

"The shelling of the Alcázar at Toledo to-night (September 6th) caused such a panic among its garrison that several officers tried to escape through the drains."

The same correspondent reports on September 11th:

"Most of the Alcázar at Toledo now appears to be in the hands of the workers, but the defenders, still resisting with desperate courage . . . are said to have taken refuge in a block of buildings nearby and to be continuing the fight from there."

On September 14th *The Times* gives the story of a short truce at the Alcázar, when a priest was allowed to enter to baptise two new-born babies and to negotiate for the evacuation of the women and children. This report is fairly accurate, but the reason Colonel



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Moscadó refused to allow the women and children to leave was because everybody in the Alcázar had no doubt whatsoever that they were safer where they were than in the hands of the Reds. This is not made clear in *The Times*.

On Saturday, September 19th, *The Times* excelled itself. The headings taken from the main column of the middle page are as follows: "Grim End at Toledo—Alcázar Blown Up—Insurgents fight to the last—63 day Siege—Red Flag flying over Ruins." Judging from these headlines, the siege was over, and this is confirmed from the reports from their special correspondent, who states, after describing the exploding of the mine: "Few of the defenders are believed to have survived. Thus, it seems, has ended a siege notable for the courage and persistence of the defence." Fortunately for *The Times* a week-end intervened.

Not at all put out by the above, this same correspondent opens his report, published on September 22nd, as follows: "The struggle for the Alcázar at Toledo continues with unabated

violence." And on September 23rd he reports in regard to the Alcázar: "It has been decided, after consultation with Señor Largo Caballero, who visited Toledo, not to make any new attempt to storm the forts still stubbornly held by the defenders until resistance has been further reduced by artillery fire."

However, this gentleman on the Franco-Spanish frontier is nothing if not persistent. The main column on the middle page on September 24th opens as follows: "A message from Madrid says that the Alcázar has fallen. The approach of the insurgent forces spurred the Government militia to a new attack on the fortress. The attack began this morning. The fate of the last defenders and of the women who had freely chosen to remain with them to the end is not known."

On September 25th this *Times* special correspondent seems getting rather fed up with the Alcázar, "in the cellars of which a few defenders are believed to be still holding out".

On Monday, September 28th, *The Times* announced that the Alcázar had been relieved,

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the paragraph dealing with this event bearing a headline in black type: "Jeers from Alcázar."

It is true that some of *The Times* correspondents appear to have quarrelled with the Nationalist Government (see *The Times* of September 12th, which reports the expulsion of one of their reporters), but this should not excuse our most famous newspaper from having, day by day, given so prejudiced and incorrect account of one of the most courageous episodes in history. Had not some other papers such as *The Observer* and the *Daily Mail* had the courage to tell the truth, the attitude of the British Press in regard to the Civil War in Spain would seriously have damaged British prestige and reputation for fair play.

This pro-Madrid attitude not only filled the Britons in Spain with rage, shame, and amazement, but it bitterly disappointed the Spanish Nationalists. For centuries the Spaniards have learnt to admire everything British, the love of freedom and fair play, the traditional kindness and hatred of cruelty. Consequently, when

the Civil War broke out the Nationalists had never doubted that they would have the sympathy of Britain, even though at first open support might be withheld.

The main reason for the British bias against General Franco seems to be the fear that he is a Fascist, and that his rebellion is a Fascist rising against a properly elected democratic Government. Both these reasons are untrue.

General Franco is a Republican, and has never been a Fascist. His supporters are drawn from all classes and a variety of parties—Republicans, Monarchists, Socialists, Radicals, Carlists, Fascists, and all those who do not belong to any party, but who believe in law, order, and decency.

But Communist propaganda has managed to instil into the minds of people in many countries, and particularly in Britain, the idea that anyone who is anti-Communist, or who rises against a Government that not only permits, but openly encourages every kind of horror and indecency is necessarily a Fascist. The Nationalist movement in Spain is not a

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Fascist movement; while the Fascist organisation certainly supports Franco, the Fascists are not one of the leading parties, and form but a small proportion of Franco's supporters.

It only required the appearance of a leader to set in flames the discontent that was smouldering all over Spain under the misdeeds of the elected Government. Immediately Franco struck he was supported by a National rising of all classes which broke out simultaneously throughout the country. But, still, the British may answer, the Nationalists are in revolt against the elected Government. The reply to this is: The validity of the election is doubtful; many seats were gained by fraud through the Reds tearing up votes or smashing the voting urns. But, in any case, immediately after the elections of February 1936, the elected Government virtually became prisoners of the Reds in Madrid, and long before the rebellion began they had given up all attempt at constitutional government and took their orders from the Third International. To make confusion worse confounded autonomous Communist

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Governments, with their own presidents, have now been proclaimed in Málaga, Catalonia, Bilbao, and Córdoba, so that, including Madrid, there are now five independent autonomous Red Governments functioning in Popular Front Spain. It is time Britain pulled the Communist wool from her eyes.

It is expected that General Franco, if victorious, will govern his country with an assembly based rather on the Portuguese than on the Italian model. He will only demand to control the military, and in other matters he will seek the guidance of experts. There is no reason to suppose that Franco's victory need be detrimental to British interests. The most obvious way to ensure against this would be for Britain to be less unsympathetic, both in the Press and in her official bearing. The only possible danger that could arise would result from our present attitude which, if continued, might force Franco into a close understanding with countries who are more ready to recognise him.

There is still time to put matters right,

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because, fortunately, Britain's prestige has once again been upheld by her Navy. British residents in Spain are not pleased with their Press as a whole, nor with the B.B.C., nor with their Government's official attitude, but they are immensely proud of the part played by the British Navy. The way the Navy have handled the situation has been beyond all praise, and has made a deep and favourable impression on the Spaniards.

It has been suggested in the British Press that if and when General Franco wins, the next development will be a quarrel among his supporters as to which party and which general is to have supreme power.

This does not seem to be at all likely to happen. There is only one man the Nationalists wish for to govern their country, and that is General Franco. He seems to be universally beloved and is considered a military genius. He is short of stature, but has a remarkable personality. His officers say: "We have only to be in his presence for a short time to know why we are winning." Unlike most Spaniards, he is a man of very few words. It is said that

when he does speak it is like a telegram, and when he is not personally at the front he remains shut in his room studying maps and communicating orders by telephone all over his territory.

A letter written by General Franco three weeks before the outbreak of the Civil War, and addressed to Señor Casares Quiroga, then Minister for War, was published in *The Times* of September 7th, and is reproduced below. This letter clearly shows the efforts that General Franco was making to warn the Spanish Government that unrest in the army would get out of control if they continued to enforce their latest military measures.

“Excellency.—The state of unrest which the latest military measures are causing in the minds of officers is so serious that I should be contracting a grave responsibility if I did not communicate to you my impression on the military situation, and the peril involved for the discipline of the Army, deprived of all private satisfaction, and in a state of mental and



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material unrest which is seen—although not expressly demonstrated—among both officers and men.

“The recent orders restoring to the Army the officers and men condemned in Catalonia . . . as also the recent promotions, awake the anxiety of a great majority of the Army.

“The news of the incidents at Alcalá de Henares with their antecedents of provocation on the part of extreme elements, directed to the dislocation of the garrisons, has provoked a feeling of disgust, unhappily and stupidly shown in moments of confusion and interpreted as collective offences. These are having most serious consequences for the chiefs and officers who took part in those deeds, and have caused sadness and distress in the Army as a whole.

“All this shows clearly the deficient information which has reached your Excellency, or the ignorance of your military collaborators of the intimate moral problems involved. I would not wish this letter to diminish the good name of whosoever informs and advises you in

military affairs. I may err through ignorance. But I permit myself to assure you, supported by the responsibility of my position and the seriousness of my professional past, that the public orders [of the Ministry] compel us to realise that the information on which they are based is lacking in reality and at times contrary to the interests of the nation. They present the Army to your view with characteristics and vices very far from the truth.

“Lately Commanding Officers, most of them of brilliant reputation and highly respected in the Army, have been deprived of their posts, given to them as being of the highest distinction and confidence, and these have been bestowed on subordinates classified by 99 per cent of their colleagues as men poorly endowed with the qualities such posts demand. The lack of dignity and justice in the Army in 1917 caused the formation of the Committees of Military Defence. One may say that to-day those Committees are virtually re-created. The movement of collective indiscipline in 1917 was caused in a great measure by favouritism in the matter of promotion, but this was then

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felt in a lesser degree than it is now in the various Army Corps.

"I do not conceal from your Excellency the peril in this State of the collective conscience at the present time, in which the professional anxiety of every good Spaniard is combined with that of grave dangers to the Fatherland. Although I am at a long distance from Spain I do not cease to receive information revealing that the same state of affairs exists perhaps in a greater degree than here in the garrisons and all the military forces charged to keep public order in the Peninsula.

"Having dedicated my life for many years to the preservation of discipline in my profession, I can assure your Excellency that such is the sense of justice which prevails among our military orders that any unjustified violence will meet with resistance among the general mass of the Army, who now feel themselves at the mercy of anonymous and calumnious acts and accusations.

"I consider it my duty to put before you what I believe to be of such importance for military discipline, to enable your Excellency

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to prove the facts personally, informing yourself of them from those Generals and Commanding Officers who, exempt from political passion, live in contact with the intimate problems and sentiments of the subordinates."

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSIONS

ONE of the surprises of the Civil War has been the tremendous response General Franco has received from the upper classes. The upper classes themselves are surprised that at last they have awakened. However, when it is remembered that most families have lost by Red murder not seven or eight relatives, but more often fifteen or sixteen, the response appears natural. The morale and spirit in Nationalist Spain are astonishing—the whole atmosphere is inspiring. It becomes evident that ideals are the life-blood of a nation, and that a nation can live on grand ideals and poor social services and die on magnificent social services and no ideals. It is not what is in a man's gun or a man's belly that wins a war, but what is in his heart.

In England we talk of being "in at the death." In Nationalist Spain one feels one is "in at the birth" of a nation, in spite of the thousands of dead. And as one man said, "It is a new Spain and once Spain starts there is

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no knowing where she will stop. Spain is like that." Everywhere there is grim determination. The women have ceased to weep. Tears are not adequate to express the suffering that has been borne. There are no protestations or surprise at anything as the people seem almost numbed by the horrors they have seen.

It has frequently been stated that atrocities have occurred on both sides, and that in this respect there is little to choose between either side. From evidence received from those coming from under Red rule such a statement cannot be substantiated. Under Franco there is law and order, and agriculture and industry are progressing normally and with complete calm. In fact, conditions are quieter than they have been for the last five years, and a different spirit has appeared. The Nationalist Government has complete control of all the towns and villages under its rule. There is never any question of an order not being obeyed. The Nationalists frankly admit that, upon capturing a town or village, Reds who have made themselves notorious for wanton murder are shot.

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The British should not find fault with this, as their own law is based on a life for a life. Some Red women who have committed murder have also been shot, but in England have we not recently hanged two women for murder?

Independent British opinion states that all the Nationalist shooting of Reds has been entirely justified. They have not shot for the pleasure of killing, nor as a policy of terrorism, as has been done throughout Spain by the Reds. In Nationalist Spain there is no fear, nor is anyone oppressed.

In Huelva a railway company manager spoke of how well some of the Reds working for him had been treated by the Nationalists. Many known Reds were still employed by this company. I saw gangs of Red prisoners in Huelva clearing up the ruins of the destroyed Church of Asunción. They seemed to be taking things very comfortably. During the whole time they were under observation they did absolutely nothing except stare at me. This occupied them for some fifteen minutes.

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The question of reprisals that may occur in Madrid when the Nationalists enter the capital is looming big in a large part of our Press. But do British people really imagine that, if their relatives had been tortured and murdered and their women and children ill-treated over a period of months, their victorious menfolk would refuse to avenge these murders? Naturally there will be reprisals and possibly hundreds of Communists will be shot, but even so, it will be difficult for the Nationalists to avenge one-tenth of the murders committed by the Reds. It is a civil war that is taking place in Spain, not a Parliamentary debate. But there will be no maltreatment of women and no shooting of the innocent, though, no doubt, those known to be responsible for, or guilty of, murder will meet with their just dues.

I was in Seville at the time our Foreign Minister made his appeal for an exchange of hostages on both sides. This demand created a deplorable impression in Nationalist Spain, since it was felt that the demand made no distinction between the two sides, and was



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only made when it had become probable that the Nationalists would take Madrid.

I do not wish to suggest that every one fighting on the side of the Red army has been guilty of atrocities. This is certainly not the case. Many of the Government troops have merely been obeying orders. The worst atrocities have been committed behind the lines and away from the battle zone. When the Nationalists get hold of Red civilians accused of having committed atrocities behind the lines, one of their methods of finding out whether these men are guilty or not is to examine their right shoulders. If these are bruised from the recoil of the rifle butt, such men are generally found guilty.

The subtle propaganda put about by the Communists to the effect that General Franco is employing black non-Christian troops against Spanish white Christians is an illustration of the ability possessed by the Reds to exploit public ignorance. The Moors of Africa are not a black race, and have no racial connection whatsoever with the Abyssinians or Negroes. The very name of Moor is itself a corruption

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of their proper Arab appellation of Magariba, meaning Occidental Arabs. They are the descendants of the Arabs who settled in Northern Africa during the centuries when the Arab Empire stretched from Morocco through Spain to China. Nearly all Spanish families have Moorish blood and are proud of it. If the Moors must not fight the Spaniards on a racial disqualification, then the majority of Spaniards on both sides should be disqualified.

The Spaniards are laughing at the reasons given for the anti-Moorish propaganda.

During the Great War France did not hesitate to use, not only Moors and Algerian troops, but also Senegalese troops—a truly black race—nor did Britain hesitate to use her Indian troops in France. And did not the Bolshevik Russians themselves employ Tartar Mohammedan troops against the white Christian Russians?

Furthermore, have the Popular Front Communists any claim to be regarded as Christian when their doctrine admits of no God, and orders the destruction of Christian churches

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and the murder of Christian nuns and priests?

Another Red accusation is that the Moors have been indulging in atrocities. This lacks any sort of confirmation. The Nationalists, both officers and men, are loud in praise of the exemplary behaviour of the Moors. This praise is unstinted, not only with regard to their fighting qualities, but for their general conduct. Those who know the Arabs know that their treatment of women is ordered by their religion, and this lays it down as a crime to maltreat women since the Arab regards a woman as weaker than himself. It has more than once been reported in the Press that the Moors have objected to firing on the battalions of Red women fighting for the Madrid Government. No atrocities were reported by the thousands of Spanish prisoners taken by the Moroccan rebels during the Riff campaign.

It is not generally known that the present Popular Front Red Government offered the Moors autonomy in Spanish Morocco if they would consent to cease enrolling in General Franco's army. This offer was soon withdrawn

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because the French Government objected to it on the grounds that the French Moroccans would create trouble and also demand autonomy.

Far from the Spanish detesting and looking down on the Moors, as is spread by the Reds, many well-known Spanish families have migrated to Morocco and become Mohammedans. Among many others can be named the Torres and Bellafrige families.

It is also never mentioned that there are several battalions of Moorish troops fighting on the side of the Madrid Government. At the outbreak of the Civil War some 4,000 to 5,000 Moors were being employed in the province of Madrid on the roads. These have all been enlisted by the Red Government and formed into battalions, officered by foreigners, mostly Frenchmen. One battalion of Moorish troops was recently attached to the 5th Regiment of Militia fighting in front of El Escorial.

In the British Press it is often stated that General Franco's army is financed by foreign powers. This needs verification. At present

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General Franco governs nearly three-quarters of Spain. He is collecting the port dues, rates and taxes from this large area. Besides this, all rich families either give voluntarily to the Nationalists or they are told the amount they are required to contribute. The newspapers in Seville publish daily columns of donations. On one side are the donations in money, on the other the donations in kind. Some of the latter amount to only two slices of bread for the soup kitchens. These daily pages of donations show clearly how many working-class people are supporting Franco. Millions of pesetas have been given by the richer families. Members of the voluntary force of Requeté receive three pesetas a day from the Nationalists. Many of the Requeté hand this sum back to the Government and pay their own expenses. General Franco does not require foreign help to the same extent as the Reds, because the mass of the population are with him. While it is not denied that Franco has received help from other countries, it is believed to be far less than the assistance given to the Madrid Government by France and Russia.

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In Spain Communism has used two entirely different methods to poison the upper and lower classes. The poison prepared for the upper classes, and considered by Moscow to be best suited to their mentality, is the theory that Communism is nothing more nor less than an economic doctrine. It was to be a great new experiment of levelling up; with the wish everywhere to-day to see a better division of this world's goods, this doctrine attracted many well-meaning people. Communism claimed that it would save mankind from inequality. A price might have to be paid, but it would be well worth it—the type of Communism pumped into the Spanish intellectuals claimed to have nothing whatever to do with destruction, murder, and ill-treatment of women.

The lower classes were told an entirely different tale. Communism would bring them riches. They would shoot the masters, rape the master's wife and daughters, and become the masters themselves. Every fault of the upper classes and of religion was magnified. Class passions were whipped by lies into

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a white flame of hatred. They were told that nothing they could do would be too bad for the upper classes nor for the Church nor for those who were opposed to Communism.

Having seen the results of Communism in Spain, I state that Communism is not an economic doctrine; it is a doctrine of destruction, of inhuman murder, of torture, and of violence. Communism calls out the vilest in human nature and, in order to survive, it finds it necessary to kill or terrorise all those who oppose it. The smell of blood breeds the blood-lust of all carnivora, including *homo sapiens*.

On November 12th, while the last pages of this book were being written, Signor Grandi, the Italian Ambassador in London, made a remarkable speech at a meeting of the Committee on Non-Intervention in Spain. What he stated so entirely confirms all that it has been endeavoured to prove in the previous chapters that some extracts from this speech seem worth recording.

Signor Grandi declared that the execution of the Soviet programme, the creation in Spain

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of a system of cells and their activity with propaganda and incitement, were alone responsible for the state of unrest and unlawfulness which preceded the present Civil War.

After the outbreak of the Civil War, both before and after the agreement on non-intervention, there had been no form of direct or indirect political, financial, or military interference that Soviet Russia had not openly or covertly carried out.

Signor Grandi referred to photographs in his possession "showing how well the pupils of Soviet Russia have learned their lesson". These, he declared, included photographs of desecrated cemeteries, of graves opened and looted, of bodies taken from their graves and dragged along the streets.

"Sometimes the fury of irresponsible mobs, although revealing the full responsibility of those who instigated and led them to desperate acts, might find its explanation in the horrors of civil war.

"But what can never be justified is the cold, systematic preparation of these barbarous acts by means of anti-Christian propaganda. We



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are here actually faced by a monstrous combination of obscenity and sacrilege.

“What is this democracy that the Soviet Government have taken under their protection?

“Massacres, looting, armed robberies, gangs of bandits over-running towns and countryside, oppression by petty tyrants belonging to the worst elements of the population; daily arrests and executions of hostages; burning of churches, persecutions of Christianity; destruction of monuments and works of art—in fact, the reign of terror.

“The fight which is taking place to-day in Spain is not a fight between democratic and reactionary forces, between forces of peace and forces of war, as the Soviet Ambassador would have us believe. It is a fight between barbarism and order, between anarchy and civilisation.

“The Soviet Government are no longer a party to the agreement of non-intervention, which, after all, they never respected. The Soviet Government have claimed their freedom of action in order to send openly officers, soldiers, arms, ammunitions, war materials, and financial assistance of every description, hoping

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thus to salvage the wreck of their projected revolution in Spain.

"The Soviet Government have not spared either money or efforts to bring about this revolution. Now they feel they are being defeated.

"Thus ends amidst fire and blood the greatest attempt ever made by Bolshevist Russia to export her creed through force and cunning beyond her frontiers.

"The Soviet representative has defined it a creed of peace, but the facts deny him. It is a creed based on class hatred and on civil strife. It is a creed of war."

Signor Grandi is perfectly right.

Many Spaniards in Nationalist Spain believe that "if by washing every stone in Spain in blood they succeed in opening the eyes of Europe, and particularly of England, to the dangers of Communism, then they will not have died in vain." The Nationalists fighting in the Civil War deserve the support of every decent-minded person throughout the world. It is time that Britain awoke to the realities of what is happening in Spain.

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If a nation allows the seeds of Communism to be sown within its frontiers the inevitable harvest must be civil war, unless a dictator arises in time to prevent this harvest ripening.

Many people, who are more afraid of Fascism than of Communism, are unable to understand that Fascism, being the reaction of the best elements of a population against the worst elements, would never have come into being had Communism not been there first.

Remove Communism and Fascism will soon fade out, leaving the future safe for democracy.

It is remarkable, and a cause of much comment both here and abroad, that while our National Government pretends to be opposed to Communism in Britain, it is giving its support and sympathy to just those European Governments who are most under the influence of Moscow.

Even if the men, lulled as they are by the present wave of prosperity, see no threat to British democracy from Communism, the women of England are rapidly awakening to their danger.

## APPENDIX

Two extracts from *The Observer* of November 29th can usefully be quoted as an Appendix to this little book.

(1) From Mr. J. L. Garvin's leading article, with every word of which the writer agrees:

"A large part of this comfortable and rather careless island, apt to ignore whatever it does not immediately feel, dismisses Herr Hitler's case against Komintern propaganda as a fantasy or a pretext. Another of the sham phrases which infest and infect our politics describes the anti-Soviet array as an 'ideological' obsession or imaginary mania. You might as well deny the existence of another man's tooth-ache.

"How this view can be held at all after the Spanish object-lesson, we are beaten to think. There you have the immediate and terrible issue raging between all the true national forces of a historic land and all the subversive forces, Bolshevik and Anarchist together. Madrid and Catalonia are largely or mainly led to-day, not by Spaniards, but by foreign agents and zealots of the international revolution. The Soviet Ambassador in Spain is the chief patron, purveyor, and manipulator of the Red junta.

Without the deliberate encouragement and stimulus and aid of Moscow from a date long before General Franco had any thought of calling patriotism and nationhood to arms for the fight of life and death—without the continued Russian supplies of arms and auxiliaries—the Spanish horror never could have

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happened in its present infernal shape, and never could have been fed and prolonged as we see it."

(2) From *The Observer's* own correspondent in Rome:

"Italy dismisses the attempt of the Spanish Government to appeal to Geneva as a most imprudent move, promoted not by Madrid, but by Moscow. It is considered as a crude effort of the Soviet to create an alibi for itself.

"'It would be an act of folly for Russia to invoke the Covenant,' says Signor Gayda in to-night's *Giornale d'Italia*, 'because among other things Article 10 obliges each country to respect the internal affairs of another—and what can Moscow with its Catalonian Separatist movement say about that?'

"Signor Gayda in the same article makes a surprising revelation concerning an alleged misuse of the British flag in the Mediterranean.

"He says: 'We would warn the British authorities who wish to make the neutrality of their flag perfectly secure around the coasts of Spain that Soviet vessels loaded with cargoes of war materials for the Spanish Reds often make use of the British flag to cover the movement of their contraband goods. These vessels entering the Mediterranean skirt the coast of France before crossing to discharge their goods peacefully under false colours'."

. . . . .

The misuse of the British flag by Russian vessels was constantly mentioned, both by British and other residents of Spanish ports, during my visit to Spain.